UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1990/12/Add.7
12 December 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Special session
21-23 Feburary 1989, New York
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

MID-TERM REVIEWS OF COUNTRY AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Mid-term review of the intercountry programme for Europe

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with Governing Council decision 89/11 of 23 February 1989 requesting the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to report, inter alia, on mid-term reviews of intercountry programmes.

The mid-term review concluded that the fourth cycle intercountry programme for Europe is being implemented according to schedule and that its objectives remain relevant.

The projects originally planned in the intercountry programme have nearly all been approved - some under preparatory assistance - and their implementation is well under way. The five priority areas of the programme (energy, the environment, science/technology, transport/communications and management) all retain their original importance. Thus, projects in the environment, transport and management sectors become especially relevant as a result of increased emphasis on the ecology, increased trade and improved structures for promoting industry and business.

While more than 75 per cent of available indicative planning figure resources was committed by the middle of the cycle, the expectation is that further approvals during the latter half of 1989 and the first half of 1990 will bring total commitments to the amount of $12,202,455 against available indicative planning figure resources of $10,834,000, which is an acceptable level of overprogramming for aiming at the full use of available indicative planning figure resources.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Preparations for the mid-term review, which started in late 1988, followed the same pattern as that for the intercountry programme. Executing agencies were requested to provide updated progress reports to be presented to the five task forces through the same task force co-ordinators that were involved in the sectoral task force meetings held in 1986. These led to the selection of projects and finally the approval of the regional programme submitted to the Governing Council in February 1987.

2. From 16 to 22 March 1989, task force meetings were held in Geneva to discuss progress in projects within each of the five sectoral programmes leading to general conclusions stemming from the various discussions. Country delegations from indicative planning figure (IPF) countries as well as some non-IPF countries participated in these meetings, in addition to representatives from the executing agencies and UNDP.

3. A comprehensive report prepared on the basis of these task force discussions and recommendations was then distributed in preparation for an intergovernmental meeting held on 3 and 4 July 1989, when recommendations and conclusions were formulated for the ongoing programme as well as for the possible direction priorities for the fifth programming cycle.

4. At the intergovernmental meeting, a set of guidelines was formulated by the country delegates to help United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to speed up programme implementations and to mobilize remaining IPF funds within the current cycle. The complete set of guidelines is quoted under the recommendations of the present summary.

I. FINANCIAL DATA

5. The table below shows expenditures for the period under review.

	$
IPF funds committed to new projects during the period under review	8 212 455
Uncommitted IPF balance	2 621 545
Expenditures against approved projects during the period under review (as of 31 December 1988) a/	3 164 000
Unexpended balance of funds committed to projects (as of 31 December 1988) a/	5 048 455
Expenditure of central Project Development Facility funds during the period under review	5 741

a/ Expenditure figures for 1989 will become available as of March 1990.

II. PROGRAMME/PROJECT DATA

6. The table below gives the breakdown by sector of programme and project data.

A. Comparison of planned sectoral inputs against revised approved targets

Sector a/	ICP allocation	Total new allocation as revised at MTR	Increase
Energy	1 850 000	3 136 783	1 286 783
Environment	2 09[illegible] 000	2 272 788	182 788
Science/Technology	1 800 000	2 246 406	383 400
Transport/Communications	2 030 000	2 413 400	446 406
Management	1 500 000	1 561 793	61 793
Other	-	571 285	571 285
Total	9 270 000	12 202 455	2 932 455

a/ The list of originally planned projects as compared with actual approvals is included in annex I.

B. Projects not in original intercountry programme

7. Several projects that originated in the third cycle regional programme continued for a while during the first half of the current cycle. Total funds spent on these ongoing projects amount to $1,013,000.

8. The only regional project that was approved outside the framework of the intercountry programme was International Institute on Aging (RER/88/003). UNDP provided a contribution of $100,000 from the European regional IPF in addition to equal amounts from the interregional and Malta country IPFs.

C. Progress in programme implementations: activities and results

9. Nearly all projects that were programmed in the intercountry programme have already been approved and their implementation started. Delays were identified for some of the projects, mainly within the sectoral areas of the environment and management. A total of 23 projects have been approved while 12 more are under preparatory assistance. Three more are in an advanced stage of formulation.

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10. The energy sector was found to be most advanced in terms of implementation thanks to the preparedness of participating institutions in the region. However, some delays in the formulation and approval of projects in the sectors of the environment, transport and communication and management were spotted. While the networking approach was very positively appreciated by the receiving countries as well as the executing agencies and UNDP, it was also felt to be time-consuming to establish project networks through the mobilization of interested institutions in the participating countries. The multidisciplinary nature of environmental planning and management, and the recent introduction of management-related projects in the regional programme, were found to have taken more time for the start-up of project activities in these sectors than for the energy, transport or science and technology sectors.

11. The initial role of the executing agencies in developing the project idea and identifying specialized institutions in participating countries has been crucial. However, later on in the life of projects the need arose for transferring co-ordination responsibility to the countries through project steering committees. While this development was felt to be not always well understood by some of the executing agencies, there have been a number of occasions where lead institutions in participating countries started playing a major role in project execution. This made it possible in some instances to organize interregional outreach activities involving the Arab States regional programme as well. This has led to the approval of Support to Euro-Arab Interregional Co-operation (RAB/89/022), with a contribution of $500,000 from the regional programme for the Arab States.

12. More than 75 per cent of available regional IPF programme resources were committed by the middle of the cycle. Further approvals are expected to lead to the full utilization of current IPF resources.

13. Networking proved to be a major execution modality capable of creating a breakthrough in building up collective self-reliance at the regional level. While all regional projects use specialized agencies for their execution, national institutions participating in the various project networks have played an increasingly important role in project implementation leading UNDP to expect that in the near future their role in project execution can be even further enhanced. Some of them can therefore be expected to assume direct responsibilities for project execution in the next cycle. Except for a few projects with limited activities, such as the organization of a symposium or those concerning support for a regional institution, nearly all projects followed the network approach. This enhanced role for national institutions included the provision of managerial services in addition to technical expertise and training. In a typical network project, there is a network secretariat that plays a co-ordinating role, thus enhancing the increase of responsibilities assumed by project networks. Executing agencies, responsible for providing UNDP-financed inputs to such networks, have been increasingly concentrating on playing a supportive role while leaving more and more of the responsibilities for project execution to the countries participating in the project.

14. At the intergovernmental meeting which concluded the mid-term review on 4 July 1989, it was recommended that UNDP undertake a further study of the experiences with the networking concept in the regional programme, in order to evaluate its weaknesses and strengths in promoting a principal role for the participating countries in executing regional projects.

15. In addition to IPF countries, non-IPF European countries also participated in project networks. Their contribution has been substantial, particularly in those cases where they provided the network secretariat and co-ordination centre. For example, Greece provided the network secretariat for European Telecommunications (RER/87/025); Czechoslovakia provided network lead centres and secretariats for Computerized Coal Mining (RER/87/005) and Industrial Computerized Management Systems (RER/87/036); and Austria offered similar services for INTERNET (RER/87/020). This has been considered a welcome extra resource available to the European regional programme. While the outcome of the study on networking is eagerly awaited, the European countries participating in the programme, as well as the executing agencies and UNDP all agree that networking has already been highly successful and that it contains many promises for involving recipient Governments more in project execution.

III. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

A. Original goals and new projects

16. The programme has not deviated from its original goals or targets.

17. The new projects in the intercountry programme were identified as planned with the following exceptions.

Industrial and Organic Waste for Energy

18. The project was combined with the ongoing Industrial Energy Conservation (RER/83/003). Total IPF funds approved for the combined project amount to $681,000.

Land Use Practice Systems and Water Protection

19. This project was combined with Control of Chemicals (RER/87/008), which awaits reformulation to include the additional activities. A further $435,000 remains to be programmed under the accumulated allocations for both projects.

Technologies for Control of Air Pollution

20. This project was combined with Environmental Planning and Management Systems into a single one: Environmental Planning/Air Pollution (RER/87/010) with a budget identical to a combination of the two original allocations.

Airport Facilitation Requirements (RER/87/031)

21. This project was cancelled at the mid-term review in view of the very limited interest expressed by the IPF countries in response to a proposal elaborated by the executing agency.

Marketing and Export Promotion (RER/87/034)

22. Two different proposals were made for implementing this project but none of them received strong support. UNDP will examine with IPF countries and executing agencies how export and marketing aspects of the other management-related projects can benefit from the allocation originally set aside ($200,000).

B. Major problems experienced in the implementation of the programme

23. The complexity of some of the projects as well as the need to identify institutions capable of being national focal points for regional projects and to define their respective roles in project networks at an early stage of project implementation have delayed approval and start-up of some of the projects. However, it is expected that those projects that are still under preparatory assistance as well as those that are in an advanced stage of formulation will be approved and operational by mid-1990.

C. Role of the intercountry programme as a tool for identifying technical assistance projects financed by other donors inside as well as outside the United Nations system

24. While most regional projects have received contributions from IPF as well as non-IPF countries participating in them, the programme has not identified other technical assistance projects involving other donors, apart from the ones already programmed.

25. Concrete examples of collaboration between IPF and non-IPF countries were found in many projects e.g. Mediterranean Seismic Risk Reduction Network (RER/87/022), which has an important Italian cost-sharing contribution ($1,388,000) and Statistical Computing, Phase II (RER/87/017). Involved were non-IPF Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member countries such as Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, USSR, UK and USA.

D. Continued relevance of original programme objectives

26. The European countries participating in the mid-term review have all agreed to maintain the original programme objectives grouped according to the programme areas of energy, the environment, science and technology, transport and communications, and management.

E. Eventual changes in technical assistance needs

27. The countries participating in the European regional programme agreed to maintain most of the projects included in the European intercountry programme. However, increased reliance on national institutions has been emphasized. The networking study is expected to provide recommendations for concrete modalities to achieve this goal.

F. Programme adjustments in response to changes in the political or economic environment

28. The theme of changes in the economic situation of the European IPF countries has become a major factor that is seen by the participating countries in the light of prospects of collaborating with a strong unified European common market, as from 1992. On the other hand, many major changes have taken place in Eastern Europe, which in several European IPF countries have led to decisions to reorient themselves to a market economy. Both developments have emphasized the need for strengthening projects within the management programme area through the project activities foreseen in the present intercountry programmes.

29. Increased awareness of environmental and ecological questions in the European countries has emphasized the continuing need for UNDP assistance in strengthening European institutions capable of environmental planning, monitoring and training.

30. The participants in the mid-term review indicated that the programme areas of environment, energy and management are likely to remain priority areas in the future.

31. Improved relations between East and West, including more liberal trade patterns, would likewise make the area of transport and communications of continued relevance.

G. Technical assistance modalities to complement the intercountry programme

32. The relationship between national and regional programmes needs to be strengthened in the future. Wherever national development activities are at an advanced level, regional projects have been able to build upon such infrastructure as may have been developed at the national level and to contribute to the efficiency of the national focal points through the organization of training activities involving expertise available from within as well as from outside the region.

IV. EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

33. No independent, in-depth evaluation of the programme is scheduled. However, a study on the functioning of networking will be carried out before the end of 1989. The outcome is expected to improve the concept as well its functioning, enabling UNDP to use it more effectively in building up collective self-reliance through future regional programme activities.

34. In preparation for the fifth programming cycle, there will be an internal evaluation of the current intercountry programme.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. While the programme was considered to have remained on track, recommendations were made to proceed with the early approval of remaining UNDP regional funds, and the subsequent start-up of projects that were delayed.

36. The following guidelines were given to UNDP by the participating countries to speed-up approvals and delivery:

(a) Retain sectoral percentages of distribution of the IPF to the extent possible;

(b) New project proposals should not be accepted unless another project is withdrawn or cancelled;

(c) Proposed additional allocations for projects already approved should be scrutinized by UNDP, and the amount finally approved should be the reflection of such critical review;

(d) Projects able to generate additional funding should be given preference. Additional funding could come from UNDP (e.g., from other regional programmes), from other multilateral agencies, from the Government (e.g., contributions in kind, cash or cost-sharing) or other bilateral donors;

(e) UNDP should reduce slippage by allowing a higher percentage of overprogramming. This would enable the countries to fully utilize the regional IPF. UNDP is requested to increase the overprogramming percentage accordingly;

(f) Cancellation of projects should be considered when projects do not work well or do not move towards approval.

37. The concepts of networking and outreach should be actively pursued during the remaining programming period, as well as in the fifth cycle.

38. As to outreach, there was a consensus that the quality of several European regional projects was making it possible to organize the participation of other regions in project activities. The Arab States were becoming a privileged partner in this respect since the approval of a special allocation for this purpose in the regional programme for the Arab States, the Euro-Arab Links project.

Annex

COMPARISON OF PLANNED PROJECT LIST AGAINST ACTUAL PROJECT APPROVALS

Sector/title	Amount allocated to intercountry programme	Allocation revised at medium-term review	Increase/ decrease
		(United States dollars)	
ENERGY			
RER/80/001 Development of Integrated Farm Energy Systems a/	260 000	410 115	150 115
RER/80/004 International Co-operative Research in the Field of Low-Calorie Coal Utilization Technology a/	-	84 853	84 853
RER/87/003 Low-Calorie Coal Utilization, phase II	120 000	120 000	-
RER/87/004 Energy Planning Systems, phase I	495 000	538 000	43 000
RER/89/002 Energy Planning Systems, phase II b/	-	400 000	400 000
RER/83/003 Industrial Energy Conservation Network a/	475 000	831 191	356 191
RER/87/005 Computerized Coal Mining System	200 000	402 624	202 624
RER/87/006 Solar Application and Energy Efficiency in Building Design and Town Planning	200 000	250 000	50 000
RER/87/007 Meteorological System for Renewable Energy	100 000	100 000	-
Total for sector	1 850 000	3 136 783	1 286 783

Sector/title	Amount allocated to intercountry programme	Allocation revised at medium-term review	Increase/ decrease
		(United States dollars)	
ENVIRONMENT			
RER/82/002 Control of Toxic Chemicals, phase II a/	-	41 006	41 006
RER/87/008 Control of Toxic Chemicals, phase III	720 000	632 427	(87 573)
RER/83/001 Mediterranean Regional Aquaculture Development a/	-	(12 267)	(12 267)
RER/87/009 Mediterranean Aquaculture, phase II	200 000	401 379	201 379
RER/87/010 Environmental Planning and Management: Air Pollution	540 000	540 000	-
RER/87/013 Mediterranean Environmental Management Centre	180 000	180 000	-
RER/87/014 River Danube Water Quality Protection	180 000	190 243	10 243
RER/87/015 Effective Systems Applications for Food Safety	180 000	200 000	20 000
RER/87/016 Environmental Management for Tourism Development	90 000	100 000	10 000
Total for sector	2 090 000	2 272 788	182 788
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS			
RER/83/004 European Telecommunications, phase I a/	-	32 188	32 188
RER/87/025 European Telecommunications, phase II	270 000	600 000	330 000
RER/84/001 Trans-European North-South Motorway, phase III a/	-	12 772	12 772

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Sector/title	Amount allocated to intercountry programme	Allocation revised at medium-term review	Increase/ decrease
	(United States dollars)		
RER/87/024 Trans-European North-South Motorway, phase IV	360 000	392 440	32 440
RER/87/026 UNDP Support to the World Maritime University	145 000	111 000	(34 000)
RER/87/027 Mediterranean Transport Development	630 000	630 000	-
RER/87/028 Trans-European North-South Railway	360 000	360 000	-
RER/87/029 Postal Development Strategy	130 000	230 000	100 000
RER/87/030 Airport Facilitation Requirements	90 000	-	(90 000)
RER/87/031 Regional Centre for Occupational Maritime Health	45 000	45 000	-
Total for sector	2 030 000	2 413 400	383 400
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY			
RER/78/008 Statistical Computing, phase I a/	-	50 206	50 206
RER/87/017 Statistical Computing, phase II	300 000	250 000	(50 000)
RER/87/018 Industrial Robotics Applications	350 000	350 000	-
RER/87/019 Microbial Biotechnology and Bioengineering	350 000	350 000	-
RER/87/020 Scientific and Technical Information Network	250 000	609 000	359 000
RER/87/021 Patent Information Services	200 000	200 200	200

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Sector/title	Amount allocated to intercountry programme	Allocation revised at medium-term review	Increase/ decrease
		(United States dollars)	
RER/87/022 Mediterranean Seismic Risk-reduction Network	250 000	200 000	(50 000)
RER/88/004 Earthquake Risk Reduction Network in the Balkan Region	-	100 000	100 000
RER/87/023 Integrated Resource Recovery and Waste Recycling in the European Region	100 000	137 000	37 000
Total for sector	1 800 000	2 246 406	446 406
MANAGEMENT			
RER/87/032 European Management Consultancy	350 000	350 000	-
RER/87/033 Entrepreneurial Small and Medium Industries	350 000	350 000	-
RER/87/034 Marketing and Export Promotion	200 000	-	(200 000)
RER/87/035 Public Sector Management (Air Transport)	200 000	200 000	-
RER/87/036 Industrial Computerized Management Systems	200 000	230 000	130 000
RER/87/037 Vocational Training Systems and New Technologies	200 000	331 793	131 793
Total for sector	1 500 000	1 561 793	61 793

Sector/title	Amount allocated to intercountry programme	Allocation revised at medium-term review	Increase/ decrease
		(United States dollars)	
OTHER			
RER/79/015 Building Construction under Seismic Conditions in the Balkan Region a/	-	784	784
RER/79/017 Application of Hydrology in Survey Production a/	-	85 262	85 262
RER/83/002 Olive Production a/	-	(33 463)	(33 463)
RER/85/001 Workshop on Low-grade Coal Classification and Utilization of Mineral Resources for Metallurgy a/	-	20 000	20 000
RER/85/004 Regional Programming a/	-	398 702	398 702
RER/88/003 International Institute on Aging	-	100 000	100 000
Total for sector	-	571 285	571 285

a/ Projects carried over from previous cycle.

b/ Extension of RER/87/004, not scheduled in inter-country programme.